

Findings from the 2024 General Election

About Observe New Mexico Elections (ONME)

Observe New Mexico Elections (ONME) is a nonpartisan effort to strengthen trust in our state's elections. We train and mobilize volunteers to observe key parts of the election process and report what they see. The goal is simple: to ensure elections are transparent, accessible, and fair for every voter.

What we observed

ONME observers were trained to watch five critical parts of the election cycle:

- **Poll Worker Training** – where the people who run our polling places learn the rules and procedures.
- **Logic and Accuracy Testing** – when counties test voting machines to make sure they count correctly.
- **Early In-Person Voting** – when voters cast their ballots before Election Day.
- **Election Day** – the busiest and most visible part of the process.
- **Certification of Results** – when counties review and finalize the vote count.

Who observed



160 trained volunteers from across New Mexico served as observers. Observers came from different political parties, united by a commitment to fair and transparent elections. Each observer used a standardized checklist to record what they saw, based on state law and best practices.

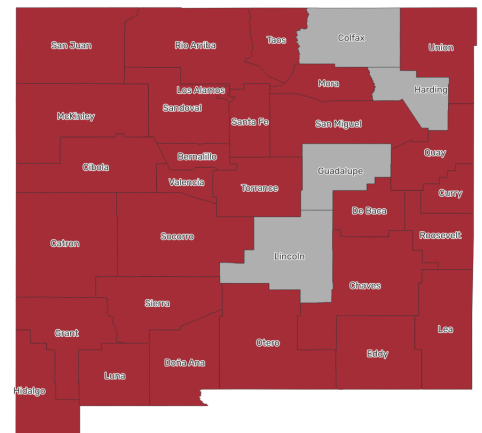
Where we observed

Observers were present in **29 of New Mexico's 33 counties**, observed 251 sites across early voting and election day.

They attended events **from September through November 2024**, covering every stage of the election process.

Why Nonpartisan Observation Matters:

When independent observers are present, voters can feel more confident that elections are being run fairly. National research shows most Americans say they trust the process more when nonpartisan observers are watching. Observation also helps election officials by identifying small issues before they become bigger problems. And for the observers themselves, it's a way to participate directly in democracy.



Election Day Findings 2024

Why Election Day Matters: Election Day is the centerpiece of our democracy. It's when the most voters turn out, and it's the part of the process that people see most clearly. Running it well builds public trust—not just in one election, but in the system as a whole.

ONME Observed: **160** voting sites in **29** counties from **Open to Close**

What went well

Overall, Election Day was smooth and transparent. Polls opened on time almost everywhere, voting sites were well organized, and election workers followed state procedures.

Poll workers rose to the challenge. Even in the busiest locations, workers were professional and committed to helping voters. Observers saw many examples of staff finding quick solutions like redirecting voters, offering provisional ballots, or calling ahead when lines grew long.

Oversight was robust. Democratic and Republican party watchers, media, and nonpartisan observers were present, adding another layer of transparency.

Voter access was strong. The vast majority of voters were able to cast their ballots without barriers, and observers reported no evidence of fraud, manipulation, or intentional disruption.

Challenges

Same-day registration was overwhelmed. The demand was higher than expected, creating long lines and, in some cases, leading voters to leave without voting.

Provisional Ballots were not always available: At several locations, voters who should have been offered a provisional ballot were told none were available. In one case, an election judge said provisional ballots were “obsolete” because same-day registration existed.

Language access was uneven. While Spanish was usually available, Native language support was not consistently provided, even in counties where it is required by federal law.

Accessible voting machines were sometimes left untested. Not every site checked these systems before opening.

Some voters were asked for ID incorrectly. This happened in a few locations, even though it is not required for already-registered voters.

Issue Spotlight: Same-Day Registration

This relatively new option gave thousands of voters the chance to participate, but it strained the system. Observers noted that with stronger preparation and better staffing, same-day registration can be a lasting success story in future elections.

Conclusion: Observers found that New Mexico's Election Day was credible, transparent, and well-run. The areas that need attention (same-day registration systems, consistent language access, reliable use of accessible voting machines, and proper handling of provisional ballots) are important, but they do not undermine the overall success of the day. Election Day in New Mexico worked, and voters could trust that their voices were heard.



Why Early Voting Matters: Early in-person voting is how most New Mexicans cast their ballots. In the 2024 General Election, nearly 60% of voters voted early, taking advantage of the flexibility to choose when and where to vote. Early voting reduces pressure on Election Day and expands access, especially for people who can't make it to the polls on a single day. Observing early voting shows how well these opportunities work across the state.

ONME Observed: **91** early voting sites in **24** counties from **Open to Close**

What went well

- **Overall, early voting ran smoothly.** Polling places opened on time almost everywhere, and observers reported calm, well-organized environments.
- **Poll workers were professional and helpful.** They managed voting procedures carefully and supported voters with questions.
- **Ballot security procedures were followed.** In most sites, protective counters on machines were checked, and ballots were handled securely.
- **Observers saw no fraud, manipulation, or deliberate disruption.**

Challenges

- **Too few officials at some sites.** A handful of small locations had only one poll worker present, leaving ballots without proper oversight.
- **Language access was inconsistent.** Spanish materials were missing in some locations, and Native language access was rare even in counties required by law to provide it.
- **Accessible voting machines weren't always tested.** Many sites did not run test ballots before use.
- **Some voters were asked for ID incorrectly.** This happened even though registered voters are not required to show ID.
- **In a few counties, voters were allowed to vote after polls closed,** which does not align with the state's Election Handbook.

Issue Spotlight: Language Access

While Spanish translations were common, Native language access was almost entirely missing. Out of dozens of sites in counties covered by federal law, observers saw translations posted in only three locations. This gap creates real barriers for voters who rely on Native language materials to participate in the democratic process.

Conclusion: Observers found that early voting in New Mexico was accessible, professional, and well-managed in most locations. Still, improvements are needed to ensure voters in every community have equal access particularly in staffing, language support, ballot availability, and consistent use of accessible equipment.

Logic & Accuracy Testing Findings 2024

Why Logic and Accuracy Testing Matters: Before every election, counties run logic and accuracy testing to make sure voting machines are working correctly. Staff load test ballots into the machines and compare the results to known outcomes. If the machine counts exactly as expected, it's ready to use on Election Day. If not, errors can be fixed ahead of time.

This process is one of the strongest safeguards in our election system. It helps catch mistakes before any real ballots are cast, and it is open to public observation as an added measure of transparency.

ONME Observed: Logic & Accuracy Testing in **24** counties

What went well

- **Testing was orderly and transparent in most counties.** Observers saw staff carefully running test ballots and documenting results.
- **Errors were rare and usually resolved.** In most counties, machines worked as expected or issues were quickly corrected.
- **Staff were available to answer questions.** In nearly all sites, officials explained what was happening when asked.

Challenges

- **Public access varied.** Only about one-third of sites had clear signage, and not all provided handouts or explanations for members of the public.
- **One county restricted access.** In Sandoval, an observer was told to obtain a special ID and missed much of the process.
- **Citizen disruptions.** In Socorro, outside observers interrupted the process and challenged staff, leading to confusion and delays. However, the vast majority of sites conducted testing with no disruptions.

Issue Spotlight: Testing Matters

In one county, a machine miscounted test ballots—showing 131 votes when 132 had been loaded. Because this was caught during testing, staff fixed the error before Election Day. L&A testing ensures problems like this don't affect real votes.

Conclusion: Observers found that New Mexico's logic and accuracy testing was transparent, careful, and effective overall. Counties can improve by making testing easier for the public to observe and by ensuring every type of equipment and ballot is included. The process is one of the clearest examples of how election officials safeguard the integrity of every vote.



Poll Worker Training Findings 2024

Why Poll Worker Training Matters: Poll workers are the people who check voters in, issue ballots, and make sure everything at the polls runs smoothly. Good training is essential. It gives poll workers the knowledge and confidence to handle problems fairly, protect voter rights, and keep Election Day organized.

ONME Observed: Poll worker training in **23** counties, making sure poll workers were trained on **40** key topics

What went well


- **Trainings were positive and professional.** Most sessions were well-organized, welcoming, and free of disruptions.
- **Key topics were usually covered.** Most trainings explained basics like how to process same-day registration, issue ballots, and close polling places.
- **Accessible locations.** Most training venues were easy to get to and navigate, with only a few reports of crowding or poor visibility.
- **No intimidation or harassment.** Observers saw respectful environments where trainers and poll workers could focus on learning.

Challenges

- **Language access requirements were often skipped.** Only about one-third of trainings covered the federal requirement to provide Spanish and Native language ballots in certain counties.
- **Some important rules weren't always explained.** Fewer sessions covered how to enforce laws against electioneering and intimidation, or how to handle police officers present at polling places.
- **Uneven coverage across counties.** Not every county went through all 40 topics, leaving gaps in preparation.

Issue Spotlight: Training Gaps

In counties required to provide ballots in Spanish, Diné, or Pueblo languages, some trainings didn't cover this at all. Without clear guidance, poll workers may not know how to provide language assistance to voters who need it.



Conclusion: Observers found that poll worker trainings across New Mexico were professional, welcoming, and effective overall. Still, more consistent training on language access, rules about intimidation and electioneering, and handling unique situations would strengthen poll workers' ability to serve every voter fairly.



County Canvass/Certification of Results Findings 2024

Why the County Canvass Matters: After every election, each county holds a canvass meeting where officials review results and certify them as complete and accurate. This is the last local step before results are sent to the Secretary of State. The canvass is important because it confirms that every valid ballot was counted and that the public can see how results are finalized.

ONME Observed: County Canvass meetings in **24** counties

What went well

- **All counties certified their results.** In every meeting observed, results were finalized and sent to the Secretary of State.
- **Calm and professional environment.** Meetings were orderly, with no reports of harassment, disruption, or attempts to influence board members.
- **Broad transparency.** In most counties, copies of the results were available to members of the public.
- **Unanimous votes.** In all but one meeting, canvassing boards certified results without dissent

Challenges

- **Results not always shared.** In four counties (Bernalillo, Catron, Grant, and San Juan), members of the public—including observers—were not given copies of the election returns being certified

Issue Spotlight: Public Access

Making results available to the public at canvass meetings is key to transparency. Observers recommended that all counties adopt this practice in the future.



Conclusion: Observers found that county canvass and certification meetings across New Mexico were professional, orderly, and credible. Every county certified its results without disruption. The main area for improvement is ensuring that members of the public can consistently access the results being certified.